Docket No.: 4078-0119PUS1

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS**

Enclosed are marked-up copy and replacement drawings.

Attachment:

Replacement sheets

Annotated sheets showing changes

Docket No.: 4078-0119PUS1

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended an in light of the

following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 19-36 are pending in the present application.

This Preliminary Amendment cancels claims 1-18 and adds new claims 19-36, which are

similar to claims 1-18 but have been drafted to better correspond with U.S. claims drafting

practice. Also enclosed is a substitute specification correcting minor informalities and placing

the specification in accordance with U.S. patent practice. A new abstract is also appropriately

The drawings have also been amended to correspond with changes made in the

specification. Applicant submits no new matter has been added.

Accordingly, an action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present

application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact David A. Bilodeau (Reg. No.

42,325) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to

expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies

to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional

fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: February 13, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

Registration No.: 39,538

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

Die Head for an Extruder

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

Die Head for an Extruder

#### **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

#### Field of the Invention

[0001] The <u>present</u> invention is <u>related</u> directed to a die head for an extruder <u>including</u> comprising an outer shell, an inner cylindrical mandrel, an annular die gap located at discharge <u>side of the die head</u>, side, an intake opening located at an intake side <u>of the die head</u> for <u>receiving a</u> the melted mass, <u>and</u> at least one <u>rotatable</u> distribution element for distributing the melted mass in a central ring channel merging into the die gap.

#### **Description of the Background Art**

[0002] From DE Patent publication No. 199 23 973 A1 illustrates A1, a known die head for an extruder. In more detail, this DE publication illustrates a die head including extruder is known, which essentially is comprised of an outer shell and an inner cylindrical mandrel. The outer shell and as well as the mandrel are formed of segments, in which each segment has having insert members for routing an the inflowing melted mass from an the intake side through a central ring channel. The central ring channel then channel, which merges into a die gap on a discharge side of the die head. Further, inside Inside the die head, the melted mass is essentially spirally guided before it exits, terminates, under pressure, in an axial direction through the a die gap. However, the extruded melted mass generally includes joint lines and flow marks caused by the melted mass being guided through the die head.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] Accordingly, one object of the present invention! is to address the above-noted and other problems.

[0004] Another object of the present invention is to provide further develop a die head for an extruder such that extrudes it provides a more homogeneous melted mass as well as an extrudate that is free of joint lines and flow marks.

[0005] To achieve these and other advantages and in accordance with the purpose of the present invention, as embodied and broadly described herein, meet this objective, the present invention provides a die head for an extruder including an outer shell, an inner cylindrical mandrel, an annular die gap at a discharge side of the die head, at least one intake opening for receiving a melted mass, at least one distribution element for distributing the melted mass to a central ring channel terminating in the die gap, an inflow channel connecting the at least one intake opening to with the at least one distribution element. Further, at least one preamble of patent claim 1 is characterized in that the distribution element and the and/or an inflow channel are formed such that due to the inflowing melted mass, the distribution element is set into torsional motion around a the longitudinal axis of the mandrel due to a flow of the melted mass, mandrel, and the flow of melted mass is routed to the

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

central ring channel.

[0006] Thus, The particular benefit of the present invention is particularly advantageous in that a more homogeneous melted mass is provided as well as extrudates that are free of joint lines, whereby an intensive agitation of the melt takes place. Further, the present inventor advantageously determined Surprisingly, it was found that a distribution element could be set into torsional motion via by the melted mass flowing tangentially to its periphery due to the viscous drag effect of the melted mass sticking to the walls of the distribution element.

In <u>addition</u>, a further embodiment of the invention, the distribution element <u>may have an</u> can be of annular <u>shape or a shape</u>. However, polygonal <u>shape</u>, shapes can also be employed, which preferably <u>has</u> have a peripheral surface that resembles a ring.

[0007] Further, Preferably, a thrust force resulting from the material expansion of the melted mass after emerging from the orifices of the distribution element is advantageously utilized to support the outer drag moment during the rotation of the distribution element. In addition, inside Inside the inner circular ring segment, the individual flows of melted mass, which are divided by orifices, are positioned on top of each other in a radial direction as a result of the rotation of the distribution element, and are routed inside the central ring channel to the die gap.

<u>[0008] Also, In a further embodiment of the invention</u>, the distribution element includes a plurality of lamellae with interspersed orifices, which are arranged at a slant such that the forces resulting from the material expansion at the orifice exits facing the inner annular segment generate a thrust moment. <u>Thus, the The outer drag moment and the inner thrust moment add up favorably increase to a total torsional moment of moment. Beneficially, the <u>distribution element. That is, a</u> required torque can be generated in this way to overcome the friction resistances and to set the distribution element into rotation, namely, around <u>a the symmetrical axis of the mandrel</u>.</u>

[0009] In addition, a further embodiment of the invention, at least one inflow channel extends extents in a tangential direction along a peripheral segment of the distribution element. Thus, due Due to the tangential inflow of the melted mass (particularly mass, particularly of the partial melt\_flows) flows, to the distribution element, a drive torque for rotating the distribution eircular ring element can be advantageously beneficially generated.

<u>[0010] Further, In a further embodiment of the invention</u>, an inflow channel engages with an outer peripheral segment of the distribution element so that as large a peripheral surface (effective area) of the distribution element as possible is affected by the tangentially-oriented flow of melted mass. <u>Also, one</u> <u>One</u> end of

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

the inflow channel extends thereby within a close proximity to the outer periphery of the distribution element.

In <u>addition</u>, a <u>further embodiment of the invention</u>, the height of the inflow channels <u>may can</u> be <u>set</u> equal to <u>a the height of the distribution <u>element</u>. <u>However</u>, element; however, it is <u>preferable preferred</u> that the height of the inflow channel increases along the tangential course of the inflow channels. In this way, a flow direction that is tangential to the periphery of the distribution element <u>is can be</u> achieved.</u>

<u>[0011] Further, In a further embodiment of the invention, the outer periphery of the distribution element is also engaged by at least one inflow channel. In addition, the The lamellae of the distribution element are arranged such that the melted mass flowing tangentially to an outer the rotor periphery (thereby thereby forming an obtuse angle) angle passes from the outer periphery of the distribution element into an area inside the distribution element, subsequently to be routed via an inner annular segment to a central ring channel.</u>

<u>[0012]</u> In <u>addition</u>, a <u>further embodiment of the <u>outer invention</u>, the shell is formed in segments, <u>and the whereby</u> shell segments and distribution elements are stacked on top of each other. In this manner, a coextrusion in <u>particular</u> can be generated. Alternatively, the shell segments can be separate in <u>order</u> to beneficially move the <u>pre-distribution</u> <u>pre-distribution</u> of the melted mass to the separation planes of the shell segments. In this manner, the tool-related part of the melt infeed required for the coextrusion can be realized in a beneficial manner.</u>

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0013] The present invention will become more fully understood from the A detailed description of one embodiment is given hereinbelow and the accompanying drawings which are given illustrated by way of illustration only, and thus, are not limited of the present invention, and drawing, wherein:

[0014] Fig. 1 is a longitudinal section of a die head in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; head;

[0015] Fig. 2 is a cross section of <u>a die head in accordance with an embodiment</u> of the <u>present invention</u>; die head;

[0016] Fig. 3 is a partial longitudinal section of a die head in accordance with according to an alternative embodiment of the present invention; embodiment;

[0017] Fig. 4 is a top view of a distribution element included in a die head in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; distribution element:

[0018] Fig. 5 is a longitudinal section of the a distribution element in accordance

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

with the according to a preferred embodiment shown in Fig. 4; and

[0019] Fig. 6 is a longitudinal section of a die head in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

#### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

[0020] Reference will now be made in detail according to the preferred embodiments of the present invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. a further alternative embodiment.

[0021] In more detail, and as shown in Fig. 1, the A die head 1 in accordance with an embodiment is essentially comprised of the present invention includes an outer shell 2, 2 and an inner cylindrical mandrel 4, and 4. Additionally, according to the invention, a distribution element 6 is provided in an area between the outer shell 2 and the mandrel 4. Further, as shown in Fig. 2, the die head 1 includes 4, which around its periphery is surrounded by inflow channels 16 (e.g., 161, 162, and 163) surrounding a periphery of 16.

Particularly for forming multilayered tubes, but also for the <u>mandrel 4</u>, and sheathing of string-shaped semi-finished products, at least one intake opening <u>15</u> for the melt flows to be distributed are arranged on <u>an</u> the exterior shell surface of the die <u>head 1 for receiving a melt flow</u>, head.

[0022] In addition, as shown in Fig. 1, the instant exemplary embodiment, the die head 1 is segmented in an axial direction and includes is comprised of a plurality of shell segments 2', each of which having a dedicated distribution element 6. Further, the The die head 1 is particularly suited for forming a coextrusion, which is a process of extruding two or more materials. Also, as coextrusion. As can be seen in Fig. 1, each of the shell segment segments 2' has intake openings 15, from which inflow channels 16 extend in a the direction of the distribution element 6 (see also Fig. 2). As shown in Figs. 1 and 2, after 6. After a melt flow (e.g., flow, that is, partial melt flows 8, 8', and 8'') 8'', pass through the orifices 7 included in of the distribution element 6, the partial flows they are routed along a central ring channel 17 and along the mandrel 4 to a die gap 19 arranged on a an discharge side 18 of the die head 1.

[0023] Further, as shown in Fig. 1, the die head 1 also includes cover plates 3 on 18. On the discharge side 18 as well as on an intake side 20 of the die head 1. The 1, cover plates 3 are provided, which press together the shell segments 2' so as to secure together, that is, with which the shell segments 2' using bolts, for example, are bolted together. In addition, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, in a first shell segment 2' facing the intake side 20 of the die head 1, 20, a first melt flow 8 8' of a first synthetic material is conveyed to the central ring channel 17, and in a 17. In the subsequent shell segment 2' in the direction of the flow, a second synthetic material 8' the plastic melt 8" of a different material is feed feed, via an intake opening 15 (see in particular Fig. 2) (not shown) arranged laterally to

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

the die head 1 and peripherally adjacent to the first plastic melt <u>8</u> 8, through the central ring channel 17. Additional shell segments 2 and/or distribution elements 6 can follow in the direction of the mandrel 4, whereby <u>laterally</u> <u>laterally</u>, further melt flows <u>(e.g., melt flow 8" in Fig. 2)</u> of identical or different material can be introduced.

[0024] In addition, To produce a homogeneous melt - as shown can be better seen in Fig. 2, the 2 - a distribution element 6 is provided, which extends at a radial distance from the mandrel 4. In the example shown 4 in Fig. the area of an interior surface of the shell 2, that is, the shell segment 2'. Preferably, the distribution element 6 has an annular arrangement arrangement, with a plurality of lamellae 11 interspersed with orifices 7. Further, the The lamellae 11 can be tapered towards the inside, and inside. Preferably, the lamellae 11 are preferably pointed or rounded towards an the interior of the distribution element 6, whereby inert zones and the negative effects resulting from therefrom, for example, long dwelling times, swirling etc. are avoided. Also, The surfaces of the lamellae 11 forming the orifices 7 may have a can thereby be planar or convex shape. A convex-shaped. The cross section of the orifices 7 may also be can narrow in the direction of the flow, or may can remain constant. Further, a A base area 71 of the orifices 7 may have a can be planar shape, or can have a radius, and/or can be horizontal or tilted towards the inner periphery of the distribution element 6.

[0025] In addition, As can be seen in Fig. 2 illustrates 2, three inflow channels 161, 162, and 163 16 are dedicated to the distribution element 6 such that respective viscous flows 81 are formed to extend extending tangentially to a the peripheral surface 21 of the a distribution element 6. That is, the 21. The inflow channel 161, 162, and 163 extend so as to engage 16 extends such that it engages the peripheral surface segment 21 of the distribution element 6. In one the instant exemplary embodiment, the peripheral surface segment 21 engaged by a respective the inflow channel 16 covers an angle of about 120 degrees. Further, as shown in Fig. 2, the The inflow channel 161, 162, and 163 narrow 16 narrows in a radial direction in the area of the peripheral surface segment 21 of the distribution element 6 until an the end portion 22 of a respective the inflow channel 16 reaches a the vicinity of the outer periphery of the distribution element 6 6, without touching the said outer periphery.

[0026] Also, the The end portions 22 of the inflow channels 161, 162, and 163 extend channel 16 extends within close proximity to a succeeding inflow channel. Thus, a dragging channel 16: In this way, the drag effect of the flow of a melted mass 81 extending tangentially to the distribution element 6 is transmitted to a maximum portion of the peripheral surface 21 of the distribution element 6, whereby the dragging drag moment generated at the periphery of the distribution element 21 caused by the wall-adhering melt flow 81 is maximized. In addition, a more homogeneous supply of the partial melt flows 8, 8' and 8" flow 8 to the outer peripheral area of the distribution element 6 is assured.

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

[0027] In addition, with reference to Figs. 1 and 2, aThe maximum height H of the inflow channel 16 is 16, which preferably is reached at the end portion 22 of the inflow channel 16 and 16, corresponds to a the height H of the distribution element 6. That is, a Preferably, the height h of the inflow channel channel, starting at an the inflow point 161 of the inflow channel 16 16, increases to the height H of the distribution element 6 at the end portion 22 of the inflow channel 16. Thus, because of a Due to the steady expansion from the an initial height h of the inflow channel all the way to the height H of the inflow channel at the end\_portion 22 of the inflow channel 16, the viscous flow 81\_used required for the rotation of the distribution element 6, which causes drag moments and extends tangentially to rotate the peripheral segment 21 of the distribution element 6 6, is advantageously intensified, beneficially intensified on the one hand, and thus on the other hand, a particularly homogeneous distribution of the melted mass is achieved. Further, an The inner shell surface below and/or above the inflow channel 16 extending close to the distribution element 6 6, is preferably tilted and/or rounded, whereby an optimization in regard to inert zones are advantageously avoided, to be avoided is achieved in a beneficial manner.

[0028] Also, with reference to Fig. 4, the The lamellae 11 of the distribution element 6 are tilted in a the same way such that partial melt flows 23 are rerouted from a respective the inflow channel 16 through the orifices 7 into an the inner cavity 24 (see Fig. 2) of the die head 1, thereby passing over an obtuse angle ß. By arranging the orifices 7 in this way, a the force action generated at an the orifice exit 72 (see Fig. 5) by the expansion of the melted mass is utilized with a lever arm 80 according to Fig. 4 to generate a thrust moment, which rotates supports the rotation of the distribution element 6 in a direction 25 around the longitudinal axis of the mandrel 4. In addition, a A drive torque is generated by the drag effect of the wall-adhering melted mass, which is caused by the melt flow of the inflow channels 16 extending tangentially to the periphery of the distribution element 6.

<u>I0029] Further, with reference to Figs. 4 and 5, aThe</u> base area 71 of the orifices 7 <u>may according to Figs. 4 and 5 ean</u> be planar or have a radius, and in its extension from <u>an the</u> outer to the inner radius of the distribution element 6 <u>may be</u> formed as a circular ring, <u>or may ean</u> be horizontal or tilted. Figs. 4 and 5 illustrate <u>an a preferred</u> embodiment of the distribution element 6 having <u>the a base area 71</u> that is inclined such that <u>an the</u> entire interior area 61 of the distribution element 6 is utilized for the discharge of the orifices 7. In this way, the force action predominant at the orifice discharge 72 and generating the thrust factor, which positively aids the torsional motion of the distribution element 6, can be extended across the entire inner surface of the distribution element 6. At the same time, the inner shell surface of the distribution element 6, which generates the braking torque, can be reduced to a minimum. <u>In addition, the</u>

The lamellae 11 may can be straight or <u>curved and have a curved</u>. The lamellae 11 can be of uniform shape in a the peripheral direction, or at regular intervals may have intervals, can be of different shapes.

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

[0030] Turning now to Fig. 3, which illustrates The melted mass can be a thermoplastic material, for example.

The distribution effect of the present invention can also be used for other free-flowing mediums.

In an alternative embodiment of a die head 31 according to Fig. 3 for coextrusion. As shown, the die head 31 includes forming a coextrusion, a shell segment 32 having can have a plurality of annular hollow chambers 34 extending in a radial plane 33 of away from the segment 32 segment. For example, Fig. 3 illustrates an outer hollow chamber 35, 35 can be provided, in which includes a distribution element 36 having a relatively wide radius. Also shown is radius extends. In a radial direction to the inside, a first inner cavity 37 with a first inner distribution element 38 and an axially staggered second inner cavity 39 with a second inner distribution element 40. 40 extend. The distribution elements 36, 38, 40 may have a similar shape as can be shaped like the distribution element 6 shown of the embodiment in Figs. 4 and 5.

<u>[0031] Further, the The</u> plastic melt is fed into the outer hollow chamber 35 via an axial intake opening 41 and a subsequent intake channel 42. The corresponding intake channels of the other hollow chambers 37 and 39 extend in <u>a similar rotation-symmetric</u> the same fashion rotation-symmetric in a peripheral direction around the <u>distribution annular</u> elements 38, 40. However, the intake openings are arranged in a different peripheral area of the shell segment 32. <u>Further, at</u> At least one intake opening is dedicated to each of the hollow chambers 34, 37, <u>39</u> 39, from which the intake channels 42 branch off symmetrically in relation to a the longitudinal center plane of the die head <u>31</u>.

<u>[0032]In addition, an</u> 31, or rotation-symmetric. An even supply of the plastic melt to the corresponding hollow chambers 34, 37, 39 <u>assures</u> is necessary to assure a self-centration of the <u>distribution</u> annular elements 36, 38, 40. <u>In addition, the</u> The pre-distribution of a melt flow, which is routed in sideways via an orifice arranged at the peripheral area of the shell segment 32, can be accomplished, done, for example, with multi-pronged distributors, center-sleeve distributors etc. <u>Also, the</u>

The distribution element is formed as a circular ring element having radial orifices, and routes the flow of melted mass to an inner circular ring segment, where the flow of melted mass is routed in an axial direction inside the central ring channel to the die gap.

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

[0033] For a uniform punctiform merging of the plastic melt for coextrusion, a first discharge channel 43 43, which extends from a segment of the outer hollow chamber 35 facing the inner side of the circular ring element 36 to an annular junction point 44. Also, a 44, is dedicated to the outer hollow chamber 35. A second discharge channel 45 45, which extends from the inside of the first inner hollow chamber 37 and 37, terminates at the this annular junction point 44, and a 44. A third discharge channel 46 originating in the second inner hollow chamber 39 also terminates at the annular junction point 44 so that various plastic melts can be stacked on top of each other.

[0034] Thus, Beneficially, coextrusion can be advantageously performed hereby done in a space-saving manner because the hollow chambers 35, 37, 39 are essentially arranged in the a radial plane 33 of the die head 31. In the example in Fig. 3, the 33. The hollow chambers 35, 37, 39 have an are all of annular shape and have shape, each having a single annular element 36, 38, 40 arranged inside. Further,

In the instant exemplary embodiment, the die head 31 has the a mandrel 47 that increases in width axially in the direction of the orifice 41. Alternatively, 41, in which the inner hollow chambers 37 and 39 as well as their dedicated annular elements 38 and 40, and the discharge channels 45, 46 are arranged. As an alternative, the mandrel 47 can be segmented.

[0035] Turning next toln a description preferred embodiment of the distribution element 6 with reference to ef Figs. 4 and 5. As shown, 5, the distribution element 6 functioning as a rotor is a circular ring element having a beveled inner ring surface 112. Further, Thus, the distribution element 6 includes the has lamellae 7, 107, which widen radially towards the outside. The distribution element 6 is also conical in its cross section, and section. The distribution element 6 can be symmetrical to its longitudinal center plane 109. In addition, beveling Beveling results in a wider distribution of individual flows of melted mass 110 (see in particular Fig. 4), 110, preferably in a radial and/or axial direction. Also, before Before reaching the inner ring surface 112 of the distribution element 6, the individual flows 110 of melted mass leave a channel 111 of the distribution element 6 and 6. The individual flows of melted mass 110 are thereby separated in an axial and/or radial direction.

<u>[0036]</u> Thus, the emerging individual flows of <u>the</u> melted mass 110 <u>are can be</u> wider in a radial and axial direction, therefore being more effective. In this manner, the <u>effect of joint lines can be removed line obliteration</u> and <u>homogeneous</u> material <u>may homogenization resulting from the rotor torsion can be <u>produced.</u> Additionally, <u>pressure the</u> loss of <u>pressure</u> in the distribution element 6 is substantially <u>reduced resulting in reduced.</u> The result is a multi-layer melt flow medley. <u>Further, because of a Due to low resistance, the speed of the individual melt flows 110 arranged at a distance to the center <u>plane line</u> 109 is greater than the speed of the individual melts 110 flowing along the base areas 71 of <u>the orifices 7. In addition</u>, the <u>orifices. The</u> lamellae 11 on</u></u>

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

a first face side 150 and an opposite face side 151 of the distribution element 6 are staggered such that one lamella 107 each is positioned above the an orifice 7. Preferably, the lamellae 107 are tapered towards the interior of the distribution element element, or else are rounded. With such a design and array of the lamellae 107, 107 such as this, a considerable improvement of the properties of semi-finished the semi-finished product with regard to a high quality of the extrudate can be achieved, for example, pipes and foils free of joint lines, thereby improving improved mechanical and optical properties of the extrudate.

[0037]In addition, the The channels 111 in Fig. 4 may can be curved of rounded, and in particular, rounded. Possible sharp edges of the channels channel 111 may can be rounded. Further, all All surfaces of the distribution element 6 may can be cambered surfaces, and a surfaces; the strength of the ring wall and a wall, the diameter and height of the distribution element 6 may can be varied.

The wall strength, diameter and height of the distribution element 6, which is preferably a circular ring element, can be varied such that a the sum of the torques driving the distribution element 6 including element, comprised of the drag and thrust moments moments, is greater than the friction moments caused by the viscosity of the melt.

<u>I0038] Turning next to Fig. 6, which illustrates another an alternative</u> embodiment of a the die head 2032 according to Fig. 6 for tube extrusion of thermally sensitive melts such as PVC. As shown, the die head 2032 includes melts, for example, PVC, a shell segment 201 having can include a displacement body 202, which on the side facing the melt intake opening 203 is conical or torpedo-shaped. Further, the The displacement body 202 is supported by a cover plate 204 located opposite the intake opening 203. Also included is an annular hollow chamber 206 extending Extending along the side of the displacement body 202 facing a the nozzle discharge 205. The 205 is an annular hollow chamber 206 includes the 206, wherein again a distribution element 6 shown in according to Figs. 4 and 5. Further, because 5 is arranged. Due to a plurality of melt-conveying melt-conveying inflow channels 207 have a similar in design as to the inflow channels 16, and the distribution element 6, the drag and thrust moments resulting from the beneficially arranged melt routing are likewise utilized for the rotation of the distribution element 6.

[0039]In addition, the The inflow of melted mass may can be conveyed to the distribution element 6 either from the outside and/or from the inside. Further, An in a radial direction exterior outer peripheral surface of the distribution element and/or an in a radial direction interior inner peripheral surface of the distribution element is thereby impacted by the melt.

[0040] Further, the melted mass may be a thermoplastic material, for example. The distribution effect of the present invention can also be used for

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

other free-flowing mediums. Thus, the die head of the present invention may be used to form multilayered tubes, and also for the sheathing of string-shaped semi-finished products.

[0041] The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are to be included within the scope of the following claims.

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

#### What is claimed is: Patent Claims:

A dieDie head for an extruder, comprising: 1. comprised of an outer shell;

shell, an inner cylindrical mandrel;

mandrel, an annular die gap at a discharge side of the die head;

side, at least one intake opening for receiving a the melted mass;

mass, at least one distribution element for distributing the melted mass to a central ring channel terminating in the die gap;

an inflow channel connecting the at least one intake opening to the at least one distribution element,

wherein at least one of gap, characterized in that the distribution element and the (6) and/or an inflow channel (16) are formed such that the distribution element (6) is set into torsional motion around a the longitudinal axis of the mandrel (4) due to a flow of the inflowing melted mass, and that the flow of melted mass is routed to the central ring channel.

- The dieDie head according to claim 1, wherein at least one of characterized in that the distribution element and the (6) and/or an inflow channel (16) are formed such that a tangential flow of the melted mass occurs on a peripheral surface of the distribution element. element (6) occurs.
- 3. The dieDie head according to claim 1, wherein 1 or 2, characterized in that the distribution element (6) includes a plurality of lamellae (11) interspersed with orifices such that an action of force occurs on the distribution element due to the flow of the melted mass.
- 4. The dieDie head according to claim claims 1 to 3, wherein characterized in that the orifices (7) are oriented such that an imaginary extension of a the direction of the melt flow of melted mass at an the exit of the orifice runs at a distance to a the centerline of the mandrel. mandrel (4).
- The dieDie head according to claim 3, wherein one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the orifices (7) are oriented such that the flow of melted mass is re-routed around an obtuse angle (B) at an the entry of the orifices so that the drag and thrusting moments, which move in a the same rotational direction, direction (25), add up to a total torque setting the distribution element in motion. torque.
- The dieDie head according to claim 2, wherein one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that at the peripheral surface of the distribution element where the tangential flow occurs, the distribution element (6) has a relatively large effective surface for transmitting a the force of the tangentially flow of inflowing viscous melted mass.

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

- 7. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein a</u> one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that the height (h) of the inflow channel (16) increases in <u>a</u> the flow direction of the melted mass.
- 8. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 3, wherein</u> one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that the lamellae (11) are pointed or rounded in <u>a</u> the flow direction of the melted mass.
- 9. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein</u> one <del>of claims 1 to 8, characterized in that one</del> end of a first inflow channel <del>(16)</del> is arranged close to a succeeding inflow <u>channel</u>. <del>channel</del> <del>(16)</del>.
- 10. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein</u> one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that in an inner ring surface (11), the distribution element (6) is beveled and/or rounded at an inner ring surface thereof. rounded.
- 11. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 3, wherein</u> one of claims 4 to 10, characterized in that the lamellae (11) and/or the orifices on opposing face sides (150, 151) of the distribution element (6) are respectively arranged in a staggered array.
- 12. The dieDie head according to claim 1, wherein one of claims 1 to 11, characterized in that the shell includes (2) is formed by a plurality of shell segments, segments (2'), each having a dedicated distribution element, element (6), and

wherein that the shell segments (2') are stacked on top of each other around the distribution elements, elements (6), and that each shell segment (2') has at least one dedicated inflow channel. channel (16).

- 13. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein</u> one of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that the distribution element (36, 38, 40) is arranged in an annular hollow space <u>within the outer shell.</u> (34, 35, 37, 39).
- 14. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein</u> one of claims 1 to 13, characterized in that the distribution element (6) is a circular ring element.
- 15. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein</u> one of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the distribution element (6) is arranged in a torpedo-shaped or conical displacement <u>body</u>, <del>body</del> (202), whereby the melted mass collides with <u>a</u> the tip of the displacement body, and the flow of melted mass is circularly distributed.
- 16. <u>The die Die head according to claim 2, wherein one of claims 1 to 15, characterized in that the peripheral surface of the distribution element,</u>

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

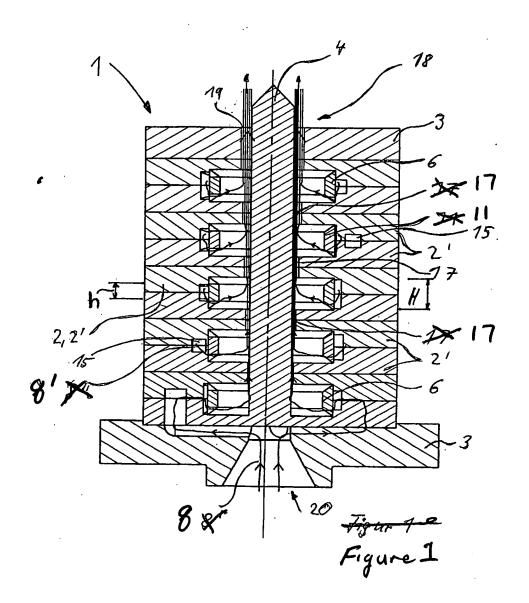
where the tangential flow occurs at occurs, is an outer peripheral surface of the said distribution element.

- 17. <u>The die</u>Die head according to <u>claim 2, wherein</u> one of claims 1 to 16, characterized in that the peripheral surface of the distribution element, where the tangential flow <u>occurs at occurs</u>, is an inner peripheral surface of <u>the said</u> distribution element.
- 18. <u>The dieDie</u> head according to <u>claim 1, wherein</u> ene ef claims 4 to 17, characterized in that the distribution element (6) includes a plurality of lamellae (11) interspersed with orifices arranged such that an action of force occurs at <u>an</u> the exit of the orifices due to a material expansion of the melted mass.

Attorney Docket No. 4078-0119PUS1

#### **ABSTRACT** Abstract

AThe invention is directed to a die head (1) for an extruder including extruder, comprising an outer shell, shell (2), an inner cylindrical mandrel, mandrel (4), an annular die gap at a discharge side of the die head, (19) located on an outlet side, at least one intake opening for receiving a supplying the melted mass, at least one distribution element (6) for distributing the melted mass to in a central ring channel terminating in merging into the die gap, an inflow channel connecting the at least one intake opening to the at least one distribution element. Further, at least one of whereby the distribution element and the (6) and/or an inflow channel (16) are formed such that the distribution element (6) is set into in torsional motion around a the longitudinal axis of the mandrel (4) due to an flow of the inflow of melted mass, and that the flow of melted mass is routed to channeled into the central ring channel.



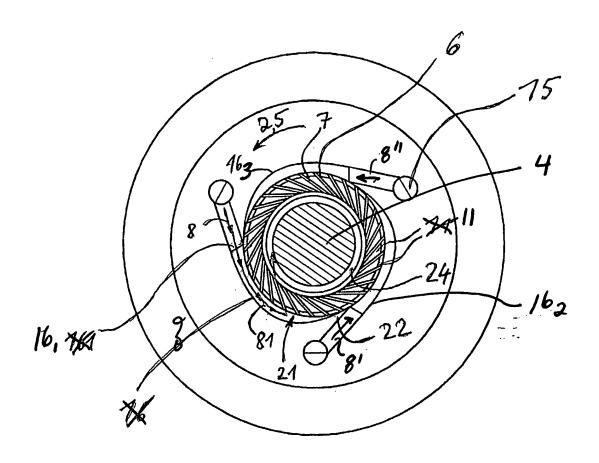
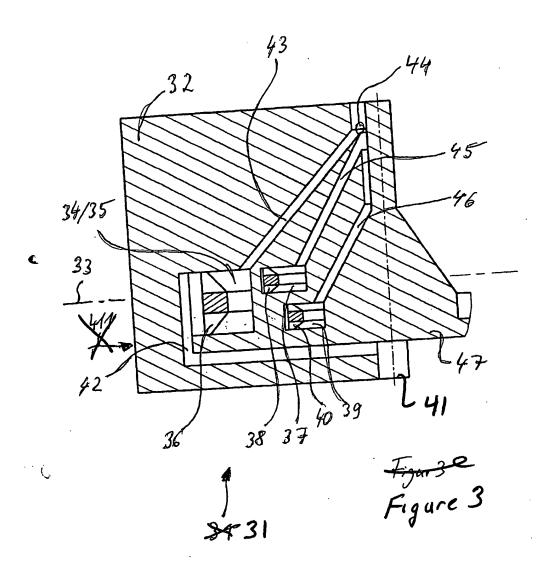
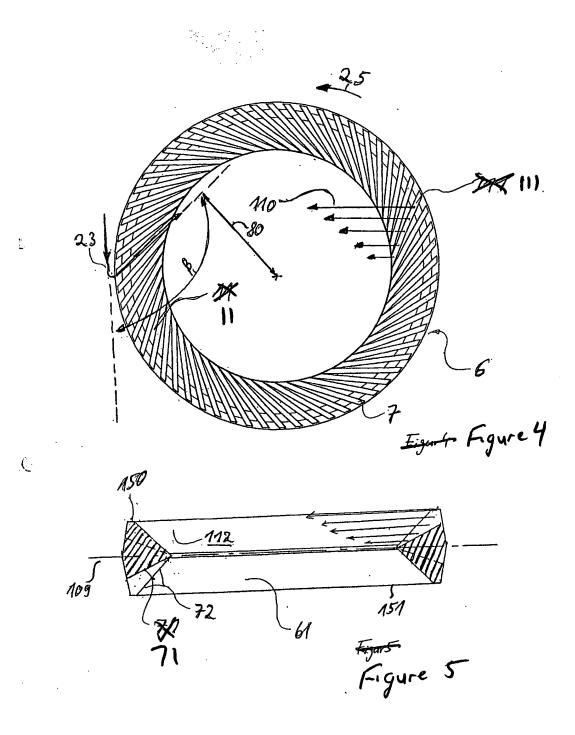
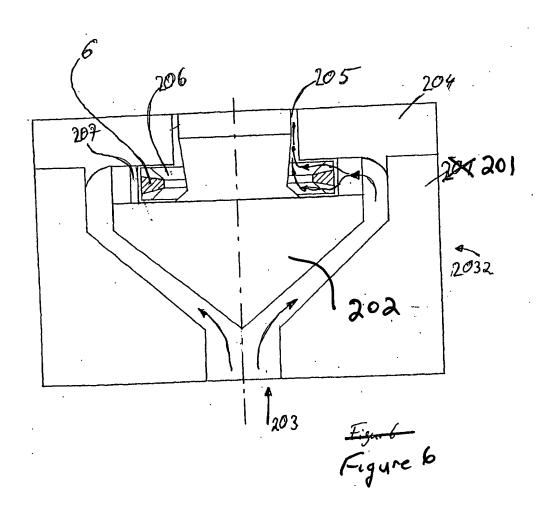


Figure 2







# This Page is Inserted by IFW Indexing and Scanning Operations and is not part of the Official Record

## **BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images include but are not limited to the items checked:

BLACK BORDERS

IMAGE CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES

FADED TEXT OR DRAWING

BLURRED OR ILLEGIBLE TEXT OR DRAWING

SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES

COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

LINES OR MARKS ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

REFERENCE(S) OR EXHIBIT(S) SUBMITTED ARE POOR QUALITY

## IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

□ OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

As rescanning these documents will not correct the image problems checked, please do not report these problems to the IFW Image Problem Mailbox.